



MARIN SERVICES for Women A HEALING COMMUNITY FOR WOMEN RECOVERING FROM CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY AND TRAUMA

**For Further Information Contact:**

Kari Millar  
Marin Services for Women  
(415) 924-5995, ext. 25  
kmillar@mswinc.org

**New Study Finds that Lack of Child Care Keeps  
Addicted Women From Receiving Treatment**

**Greenbrae, CA, April 4, 2006** – A new study out of the March issue of *Medical Care* confirms what Marin Services for Women (MSW) has long known – that low-income mothers with addiction problems have few options when they need help getting clean and sober. According to the study, “the problem of how to care for children while undergoing addiction therapy may keep many poor or homeless addicted parents from getting the help they need.” (HealthDay News).

Marin Services for Women’s move into their expanded facility in December of 2003 was done expressly to meet this need in Marin. “Over the years, we’ve seen so many women who needed and wanted to free themselves from their addiction, but didn’t want to or couldn’t afford to be separated from their children while in treatment for months,” says Director of Programs Renee Zito. “Now they don’t have to.” Each year, MSW’s Perinatal and Child Development Program enables 40 mothers to be in treatment for drug and alcohol addiction and 38 infants, toddlers and young children to be in a safe, healthy environment without separation from their mothers and to participate in a child development program at a crucial period in their lives.

Most of the pregnant and parenting women seeking help for their addiction at MSW are unemployed, homeless or near homelessness and lack the funds to pay for treatment. A majority of these women have not completed high school, have minimal employment skills and ineffective parenting and life management skills. These circumstances, paired with the responsibilities of parenting, can create enormous barriers to women who want to receive treatment for their addiction.

“For many of these people, I would guess that it was simply a problem of where to put the kids when they went to AA. For others, entering into treatment might stand in the way of pursuing employment and other responsibilities they would have towards their children,” explained lead researcher Dr. Stefan G. Kertesz, an assistant professor of preventive and general internal medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. (HealthDay News).

By the time the mothers come for treatment at MSW, the prenatal child, infants and toddlers have often been negatively affected in several ways by her addiction. The three to six months during which most pregnant and parenting mothers are in treatment at MSW is a critical time for intervention in the lives and health of the children.

MSW's Child Development Program provides a safe, developmentally appropriate and enriching center for children of women receiving treatment in MSW's programs. Comprehensive services encompass all aspects of a child's development and learning. Emphasis is on providing a comfortable and nurturing environment for the babies and children with a healthy diet, and monitoring and referral for regular well baby and child health care. Developmentally appropriate activities, play, recreation, exercise, and early childhood education are provided for toddlers and young children to assist in their healthy physical and emotional development. MSW's comprehensive services encompass all aspects of a child's development and learning. An individual treatment plan is developed for each child including activities for the childcare worker and the parent to implement during the day.

MSW's program helps to assure that at-risk children will have healthy, sober mothers and the help they need to recover from early trauma before they begin school so that they may go on to learn and grow into healthy adults.

*Marin Services for Women is a licensed, non-profit corporation that provides chemical dependency recovery programs for women and families. Since 1978, MSW has offered a variety of unique programs to assist women in recovering from addiction in a safe, supportive, healing environment. Last fiscal year, MSW served 444 women and over 300 members of their families. Marin Services for Women graduates a remarkable 70% of clients who enter their programs. The mission of MSW is to advance community health by providing a full continuum of superior quality chemical dependency recovery services for women and their families. MSW's philosophy links recovery from addiction with personal, relational, and economic empowerment. MSW is dedicated to meeting the community's need to understand the nature, prevention and treatment of alcohol and other drug addiction.*

HealthDay News. "Child Care Needs Keep Poor Addicts From Treatment." 24 Feb. 2006. 10 Mar. 2006  
<<http://www.forbes.com/lifestyle/health/feeds/hscout/2006/02/24/hscout531211.html>>.

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